"Dear James McCord..."

by Paul Krassner

A correspondence between our man and the Watergate conspirator, in which legal threats are bandied about and Watergate, the JFK assassination, the Bay of Pigs, Chappaquiddick and Charlie Manson find themselves in the same strange bed.

"And you may see me tonight with an illegal smile . . . "
—John Prine

"The exact composition of the secret government does change from hour to hour, and all this without the benefit of elections and without benefit of anything so gross as being fired or having some transgression proved. You can be removed from that access literally by having the wrong expression on your face in the course of receiving a briefing from your boss. He can decide suddenly that you may be getting scruples."
—Daniel Ellsberg

"Freedom's just another word for nothin' left to lose . . . "
—Janis Joplin

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On November 10, 1973 convicted Watergate conspirator James McCord sent the following to me on his personal stationery:

This is to place Mae Brussell, Paul Krassner, and The Realist . . . on legal notice that a civil suit for libel is being filed against each of you for the article by Mae Brussell on page 13-31 of The Realist No. 95. The statements are libelous, untrue, and malicious on page 14 under "5. 1963 assassination of President Kennedy" pertaining to the writer, and untrue statements regarding him appear elsewhere in that issue of The Realist.

Your statement in that issue alleging that the 4 Miami men involved in Watergate were involved in the J.F. Kennedy assassination is also untrue. They were nowhere near Dallas nor in France as you have alleged, have witnesses as to their whereabouts on the dates alleged, and, as I, had no involvement ~~whatever in the J.F. Kennedy assassination conspiracy.~~ Your article is as vicious as any article can possibly be with the statements and inferences carried that these men were a part of a conspiracy to murder a President.

You may rest assured that I will carry through to completion with the libel suit on this matter. Copies of this letter are going to each of the men from Miami, and their lawyer.

You could have contacted me, or my attorney to try to verify your story, prior to publication. You did neither.

[signed] James W. McCord, Jr.

* MCCORD CONCEDES THE EXISTENCE OF THE CONSPIRACY.

On December 7, I sent the following response:

Dear James McCord,

Several years ago I stood with other anti-war protestors sticking flowers into the barrels of soldiers' rifles and chanting "Join us." Last spring at the A.J. Liebling Counter-Convention in Washington, D.C. a journalism award was presented to *New York Times* correspondent Homer Bigart. He is mentioned in the Pentagon Papers as having originally been guilty of passing along the misinformation of CIA press briefings from Vietnam. But if we can embrace young veterans who have committed crimes against humanity, certainly an establishment reporter is worth forgiving.

After the award-presentation, there was a panel on Watergate. I posed this question: "Do you think it's just a coincidence that James McCord's attorney, Bernard Fensterwald, is also director of the Committee to Investigate Assassinations?" There was no satisfactory reply. Months later I wrote and asked Fensterwald himself, enclosing a few issues of The Realist, including the one which offends you. On October 5, he wrote back:

Dear Mr. Krassner:
I have your letter of October 2 and thank you very much for the enclosures which I look forward to reading . . .
As to my representation of James McCord, it may not be complete coincidence that I both represent him and act as an officer of the Committee to Investigate Assassinations. I believe that McCord settled upon me as his attorney because, for better or worse, I have earned the reputation of a hard-nosed Washington lawyer who does not shy away from head-on battles with the federal

government. For whatever it may be worth, I did not meet McCord until March 1973, and I have never had any connection whatsoever with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Looking forward to meeting you at the November convention, and again, with thanks, I am

Sincerely yours,
[signed] Bud Fensterwald

Your previous attorney, Gerald Alch, testified to the Senate Committee:

Mr. McCord was extremely upset over what he believed to be unfair newspaper coverage of his disclosures. He kept smashing his fist on my suitcase. At this point, Mr. Fensterwald said to Mr. McCord, "The reporters have been asking me whether or not you or I had ever had any past relationship. I told him that we had."

At this point, Mr. McCord looked up with a surprised expression. Mr. Fensterwald said, "Well, after all, you have in the past submitted to me checks which were donations to the Committee for the Investigation of the Assassination of the President." Mr. McCord smiled and said, "Oh, yeah, that's right."

At any rate, Fensterwald has been a guest at the home of Mae Brussell, where they exchanged assassination data. For you to call her article "vicious" is a transparent ploy. Mae is the most responsible researcher I've ever met, and the most compassionate human being. Those two qualities have guided her in a decade of seeking the truth about political assassinations. A majority of the American people believe that there was a conspiracy behind the murder of President Kennedy, but our children learn in school that it was a single assassin. That's not education. It's propaganda.

Your justification of police-state surveillance has been secret intelligence reports to which you had daily access, about planned violence by the peace movement, but the frightening possibility is that you may not even be aware that those secrets are lies. For example, Daniel Ellsberg mentions in *Rolling Stone* the likelihood that the White House plumbers were involved in the bombing of the Capitol building in 1971 which was blamed on the Weather Underground.

The note taking credit for that incident was signed Weatherman, although they had already become Weatherpeople. This male chauvinist slip first made me suspicious that perhaps those folks had actually been captured and killed. When I co-edited with Ken Kesey the *Last Supplement to the Whole Earth Catalog*, we included a communication from the Weather Underground which I wrote myself. However, I didn't hear from my old friends as a result of that practical hoax.

More recently, after the final World Series game, black baseball star Reggie Jackson revealed on TV that he had been receiving threats against his life from the Weather Underground. This made no sense except to perpetuate the government's strategy of divide and conquer. The same applies to a long letter supposedly from Weatherperson Jane Alpert in *Ms.* Magazine. But if Howard Hunt can forge a cable to imply that President Kennedy was behind the assassination of Diem, and if Gore Vidal can contend that Arthur Bremer's diary is a fraud, then we can begin to understand the depth of insidiousness.

Peter Simon

Krassner: "Instead of suing me why don't you expose the game plan to declare martial law using the energy crisis as an excuse?"

For the past two years I've been investigating the Charles Manson case. The murders which are still associated in the public's mind with Manson were actually committed by Tex Watson, who received a separate trial when federal authorities wouldn't permit his extradition from Texas to Los Angeles. In order to find Manson guilty, prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi had to convince the jury that he made zombies of Watson and the women. But in Watson's trial, Bugliosi had to convince the jury that he wasn't a zombie at all. The judge wouldn't allow the jury to hear about this schizophrenic approach to justice.

What never came out was that Manson and Watson had been meeting with a representative of Navy Intelligence, posing as a hippie artist, who provided the dope and the Helter-Skelter scenario. The Rand Corporation and the Hudson Institute had extrapolated on the implications of a spreading counter-culture, away from the nuclear family unit upon which the entire inhumane economic system is based. When Tim Leary was sent to Folsom Prison, they put him in solitary confinement in a cell next to Charlie Manson, who said to Leary: "They took you off the streets so that I could continue with your work."

In terms of an overall continuing motivation, then, the Manson case can be seen as a missing link between the assassination of President Kennedy and the Watergate iceberg. Under the heading "Knowledge Omitted from the Campus," Mae Brussell wrote in the first issue of her Conspiracy Newsletter which I published in The Realist:

Clandestine assignments are composed of a combination of acts whose main ingredients are secrecy and lies. Secrecy is necessary because most of the assignments and methods are illegal. The operations, when discovered, are covered by lies.

The patterns of illegal, criminal spy operations, with certain agents reappearing in many of the same assignments, become more complicated every day.

She proceeded to list some examples—1. 1954 assassination of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman, Guatamala; 2. Richard Nixon, 4th Crisis, Latin American tour, cold war propaganda; 3. U-2 flight over USSR, to sabotage summit conference for cold war; 4. Bay of Pigs; 5. 1963 assassination of President Kennedy; 6. Plans to assassinate the President of Panama in 1971; 7. ITT, CIA, Chile and Watergate; 8. Ellsberg, Dr. Fielding robbery—and then she added:

None of these people, including the President, believe they are breaking any laws. Certain members of the Defense Intelligence Agency, CIA, Division V of the FBI, Secret Service, armed forces and National Security Council have been warfare killers and war criminals for a long time. They are now conducting para-military warfare inside *the U.S.*

Murders, conspiracies, entrapment, assaults, false imprisonments

 * MANSON IS CIA, ALSO!

are part of warfare. Unsuspecting citizens are taken by surprise because they did not realize that white America was the enemy. Blacks, Indians and Chicanos have known for a long time the open warfare against their existence. Watergate is an education into a civil war which is not likely to go away without a struggle. Expect a counter-attack by the White House and even the armed forces if necessary.

Under "5. 1963 assassination of President Kennedy," she had written:

Jose Romero, soldier of fortune, was approached by hired assassination team from the U.S. which planned to kill Kennedy during his 1961 visit to France. Romero definitely remembers Frank Sturgis as one of the representatives from the U.S. James McCord, according to Louis Tackwood, was in Dallas the day Kennedy was shot, and flown afterwards to the Caribbean. The National Archives have FBI reports indicating Frank Sturgis as a friend of Lee Harvey Oswald and David Ferrie. Sturgis had a Miami arsenal of weapons, and original plans were to kill JFK in Miami in 1963.

The reference to you, James McCord, alias Martin, was taken from Pages 171-2 of *The Glass House Tapes* by Louis Tackwood, published by Avon Press. (Why aren't you suing them, too?) Of course you all have witnesses as to your whereabouts, although if you have nothing to hide why would you bother to check out each other's alibis? Henry Cabot Lodge didn't pull the trigger on Diem, but there were plans for his transference from Vietnam when the coup was designed. Richard Nixon was in Dallas on November 22, 1963—he arrived on a private plane and departed on a commercial airplane—but he forgot that fact when he signed a deposition for the Warren Commission.

In 15 years of publishing *The Realist*, only one libel suit has actually come to court. I had called another editor a liar, in print. I proved to the satisfaction of the jury the truth of my statement, and was found not guilty. In your proposed libel suit, truth would not be my defense because evidence has been locked up, destroyed or altered, and witnesses have been bought off or murdered. You yourself said you were afraid of going to prison because you would be killed since you know too much.

No, I will defend myself on two other grounds. One is lack of malicious intent. In everything I've written or said, publicly or privately, I've tried to be free of hostility. I invented the Youth International Party so that we could be called Yippies, but when Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin got caught up in their own rhetoric, such as "Kill your parents," I disaffiliated myself from the non-organization.

The other defense is that you have not been hurt by what I published: you who were caught in Democratic National Headquarters wearing rubber gloves; you who helped write the plans for a military takeover of Greece; you who specialized in censorship of news media and mail in the United States. I don't think a jury would find it reasonable that I have stained your reputation. But it's not too late to redeem your own soul.

N.Y. Times

McCord: "I . . . had no involvement whatsoever in the J.F. Kennedy assassination conspiracy."

Instead of suing me, why don't you expose the game plan to declare martial law using the energy crisis as an excuse? Why don't you tell how military intelligence is trying to bring about a race war by acts of provocation around the country? Why don't you explain how Nixon is expendable now that we have President-to-be Gerald Ford who helped cover up the bombing of Cambodia, Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworsky who helped cover up Lee Harvey Oswald's connections with Navy Intelligence, and Attorney General William Saxbe who helped cover up the Kent State massacre? Why don't you disclose what was actually done to Teddy Kennedy and Mary Jo Kopechne at Chappaquiddick? Why don't you tell what really happened to J. Edgar Hoover, George Wallace and Lyndon Johnson? Why don't you call a press conference to describe the rampant experimentation in human psychosurgery that is currently taking place in American institutions?

Oh, I'm aware of how bizarre this plea must seem to you, but as the late David Ben-Gurion once said, "To be a realist, one must believe in miracles." Come, James McCord, share that space between John Prine's illegal smile and Janis Joplin's illegal tears. Join us. Join us.

Your move,

[signed] Paul Krassner
Editor and Zen Bastard

P.S. The thing that confuses me is that, on one hand, in your letter to Judge John Sirica, you said that you "felt the White House was taking over the CIA for political purposes, which smacked of the situation which Hitler's intelligence chiefs found themselves in the 1930's"—and therefore you refused to trade silence for executive clemency —yet on the other hand, you warned that "every tree in the forest will fall" *if* the White House blames Watergate on the CIA. Does this mean your commitment to truth depends only on whether or not the finger is pointed at the company you've worked 21 years for?

Incidentally, I've taken the liberty of sending copies of our correspondence to reporters and Senators. How ironic that a few sentences were inadvertently left out of my very first "press release." I attribute this, naturally, to a sinister force. But if you think *that's* weird, wait till you hear how your lawyer, Bernard Fensterwald, feels about your case. He merely wants to handle your involvement in Watergate; as far as your possible connection with the assassination of President Kennedy is concerned, he says he doesn't want to get involved. So, if you really did donate checks to his Committee to Investigate Assassinations, it would seem to me that you ought to ask for your money back.

And, finally, there's an old Chinese curse which I offer as a New Year's blessing: "May you live in interesting times."

—Paul

The Realist ($3 a year) and Mae Brussell's Conspiracy Newsletter ($6 a year) are both available from Main PO Box 4227, San Francisco, Calif. 94101.

L.B.J., ALSO, WAS ASSASSINATED!

The Crawdoodah Gazette

"All the news, all the doo-dah day"

Written & compiled by Greg Mitchell MARCH, 1974 *No Cents Whatsoever*

Hef's Girl Raps Playboy Philosophy

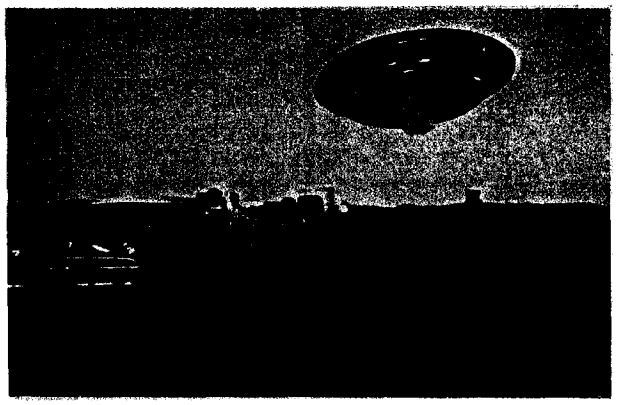
The 21-year-old daughter of Hugh Hefner (by a marriage that ended in divorce in 1959) has turned up as a Phi Beta Kappa senior at Brandeis University. Christie Hefner told *Esquire* that she is appalled by *Playboy's* notion of femininity but admitted: "The girls who pose are paid well, and they do it by choice. And if some of the articles make the girls sound insipid," she added, "well, I've met the girls and some of them *are* insipid."

A BASKET CASE

Edward Ben Elson is still around, and if you aren't one of his Chosen People, you should be glad.

A wacked-out Wisconsin attorney, Elson announced last month that he had been visited by a "beautiful black angel" who informed him that Kohoutek was not a comet, as was reasonably believed, but a space ship, sent by alien creatures on a mercy mission to save him and 144,000 other Earthlings. Elson said he had been named captain of the spaceship and given the responsibility of selecting an additional 1000 people to be saved; the others—mostly blacks, women and the mentally ill, who (according to Elson), are all in closer contact with the "oversoul" than others—had been nabbed by UFOs over the past year and safely stored in bushel baskets in Elson's basement.

The rest of the world was doomed, Elson said, because Kohoutek's tail was going to lash across the globe resulting in explosions of petroleum which would destroy the earth.



The nucleus of the "comet" was to hover over McFarland, Wisc., lower an "astral escalator" and take Elson, his wife Patricia and their 144,000 roomates aboard.

If that seems like a lot of people to cram on to one comet, consider that the Chosen People have been miniaturized by the aliens to one-half inch in height and placed in suspended animation. (Elson says.)

Elson admitted that his wife had been less than eager to take the flight, and says she even threatened to sweep the little people out of the basement. Maybe the aliens missed their appointment because they found the earthlings ungrateful? Elson claims that his wife has gone so far as to sell a couple of the chosen ones to a local used car dealer who wanted to use them as hood ornaments for Cadillacs . . .

Watergate Open, Dick's Double Drowns

"It's been terrible. I haven't had a major date since Watergate. Nobody thinks anything about Nixon is funny anymore, not even how he looks or talks or behaves."

James La Roe, a.k.a. Richard M. Dixon, who made a career of looking like Tricky Dick, has been cast adrift by the rough waves of Watergate. Like Vaughn Meader, who just a decade ago lost his "First Family" schtick when JFK was shot, Dixon has taken the President's troubles personally.

"In the first Nixon Administration," Dixon declared, "I was sensational. People howled when they looked at me. I earned $50,000 a year just working conventions. Now I have a whole act, an entire routine, and I can't get a major booking."

Dixon claims he "humanized the President with my act" and in fact voted for him in 1972 but was rewarded by being placed on the Dean's List. Pondering the possibility of Nixon's impeachment, Dixon muses: "I guess I would have to turn my comedy act into a tragedy."

J. EDGAR OFFED?

Was J. Edgar Hoover offed by the Cubans who later became involved in the Watergate break-in? The *Harvard Crimson* fetched far for that story last month in reporting that at least two sources close to the Cubans have given affidavits to that effect to the FBI and the Senate Watergate Committee. The *Crimson* quoted Felipe De Diego, an operative in the Ellsberg break-in, as at first admitting and then denying that Hoover's home had been burglarized. The story holds that the Cubans left a vile of poison, thyon phosgate—which induces heart seizures of the type that killed Hoover and is undetectable in the body—in Hoover's personal toilet articles.

Buy and Buy

According to *Media and Methods* magazine, the typical American 14-year-old has seen 350,000 television commercials . . .

Peace Bond Won't Mature

If you're still looking for that great Peace Dividend generated by the "end" of the Vietnam war and the supposed multi-billion dollar saving that should-have-been: forget it. The new Defense Dept. budget calls for a $5-6 billion *increase* over last year's, to a record high, $85 billion . . .

The Jews arose from the holocausts, a cause of universal joy; but the Jews arose like warriors, armed to the teeth. They took possession of a land, they exiled and destroyed old Arab communites, they (a minority) made outsiders of those who were, in fact, the majority of citizens. Then they flexed their muscles; like . . . the idolators . . . like Babylon and Egypt and Assyria; like those kingdoms which Israel's own prophets summoned to judgment, Israel entered the imperial adventure . . .

If the Jews are indeed the people of promise, and Israel the land of promise, then it must follow that God has willed the two to coincide. They are swallowed up in the end, they disappear into glory. And if the means include domestic repression, deception, cruelty, militarism? And if the classic refugee people is now creating huge numbers of refugees? Are such means as these swallowed in glory? Or do they stick to the throat of those who believe, as Judaism taught the world to believe, "Thou shalt not kill."

—Daniel Berrigan, in the speech, labeled "anti-Semitic," that cost him the 1974 Gandhi Peace Award

Ray Plots King Conspiracy Break

The Chicago *Daily News* has quoted "a source close to" James Earl Ray as saying that if the convicted killer of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is given the hearing he is now demanding he will "name the names, dates and places" involved in a conspiracy to assassinate the civil rights leader.

Ray pleaded guilty to the shooting in 1969 and is serving a 99-year sentence but has repeatedly maintained that he was coerced into a guilty plea by his attorney, Percy Foreman. Proclaiming

his innocence, Ray recently filed a writ for a new trial.

The "source" close to Ray told the *Daily News* that Ray now contends that the King conspiracy existed for nearly a year previous to the March, 1968 murder and that the central figures were a group of white Southerners headquartered in New Orleans. The planning for the alleged conspiracy took place at various times in several other cities, according to this report.

"I never saw anybody shoot King, but that's as far as I want to go," Ray told a reporter for the *Nashville Banner* last month. At his trial in 1969 Ray testified that he had shot Dr. King but he balked at denying there had been a conspiracy behind it.

Foreman reacted to his former client's latest assertions by declaring that Ray was "either bluffing or planning to lie" about the conspiracy. "Ray acted alone," Formean said, "on his bias against black people."

"I think many of his judgments have been very poor."

"Mr. Nixon has made mistakes, and this is one of them: you cannot, as President, isolate yourself."

"It is quite obvious that I do not agree with everything the Nixon Administration does."

"I can make no excuses for Watergate."

"I believe that every Christian should give 10% of his income to his church or charity, and above that if the Lord prospers him." (In reference to Nixon's announcement that last year he had donated only $296 to charity.)

"I know that I told the people who handle my own tax affairs to always pay the tax if there's any question. I think this ought to be the attitude of all taxpayers, but especially one in such a sensitive office."

"Whenever we go to church together he always has to borrow money from me to put in the collection plate."

—Rev. Billy Graham, in his well-publicized "break" with Richard Nixon, an interview in *Christianity Today* magazine

By Oliphant

'Smile! You Are Dancing Because You Are Now a Democracy!'